01853

1966/07/09

PRESS CONFERENCE BRIEFING PAPER

THE FAR EAST

Subject: General Thieu's Speech of July 8

You may be asked to comment on General Thieu's speech of July 8 in which the press reports he threatened to invade North Vietnam.

CURRENT SITUATION REPORT:

General Thieu's speech at the July 8 graduation ceremony of the Thu Duc infantry officers school has been given some press attention because of his remarks regarding a possible landing of troops in North Vietnam. His words were:

> "No one can reproach us -- the victims of aggression -- for destroying any military, economic, and industrial installations anywhere in the north. Since these installations are used as means of aggression against us, our act is a legitimate act of self defense. Even a landing of troops on enemy territory -- if need be -- will be undertaken in order to force the aggressors to end their aggression early and in order to protect world peace."

When asked for comment on the speech the Department spokesman said that based solely on his reading of press reports he understood General Thieu was speaking of a hypothetical situation.

SUGGESTED POINTS IN REPLY:

1. That General Thieu was speaking at the graduation ceremony of a military school.

surprising.

2. That you have read the text of the General's remarks and it is clear that he was speaking of a hypothetical situation -- describing the possibility of certain actions if they were to become necessary.

REPRODUCED FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MANUSCRIPT DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

3. That U.S. policy of not threatening the regime in North Vietnam is well known; our objective is to bring them to halt their intervention in South Vietnam.

Clearance:
FE - Mr. Unger

FE/P:JMoore/pmh 7/9/66

REPRODUCED FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MANUSCRIPT DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS